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A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

The State and the Christian Schools
MARION SNAPPER

All the World's A Stage J. D. EPPINGA

"I Wrote My Gospel for the Sake of a Friend"
JOHN CALVIN REID

Recovering A Historical Revelation
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The Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel
PAUL CALVIN ZYLSTRA

The Los Angeles Case HARRY R. BOER

Editorials on state aid to religious schools; letters on Biblical criticism and infallibility, and on home missions policy.

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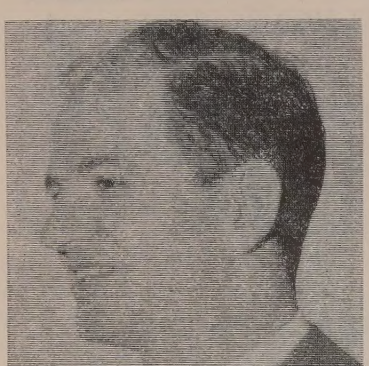

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VOLUME XI NO.

Editorial Board

HENRY STOB, HARRY R. BOER, JAMES DAANE, LESTER DEKOSTER, GEORGE STOB

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AS WE SEE IT

THE STATE AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Marion Snapper, *Assistant Professor of Education, Calvin College*

ALL THE WORLDS A STAGE
J. P. Eppinga, *Minister of the La Grave Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan*

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In This Issue

Marion Snapper of the Education Department at Calvin College puts the question of federal aid to religious schools in a new and helpful light as he shows that the state does, in fact, control all educational institutions, that education is one of the chief activities of government, and that Christian schools have an important place in U. S. society. This latter point is also made in the first editorial under "As We See It." The editorial also reminds us that Christian stewardship requires us to examine the question of federal aid very closely rather than dismissing it as though a negative answer to it were obvious to everyone except aggressive Catholics and confused Protestants.

In a sermon that ought to keep us from retiring to our rocking chairs for a while, the Reverend J. D. Eppinga puts the Biblical figure of Jonah into Biblical focus — and all would be retired Christians with him. A strong reminder that we are not to follow after the god of Security but after Christ.

The gospel-writer Luke, in the words of Dr. John Calvin Reid, tells us why he wrote about Jesus, and in so doing he directs our attention to the highly personal nature of Christian witness.

Dr. Simon John De Vries's concern is that we should take seriously the fact that the Bible came to us in history. He expresses this concern against the tendency of some in the Christian church to view the Bible as though it came full-blown from heaven. The *human* as well as the divine character of the Scriptures must be kept in view if we are to see the Bible as it really is. He then shows what a historical revelation means in regard to scriptural infallibility and inerrancy.

The Reverend Paul Zylstra's special study of Calvin's preaching of the gospel reveals how strongly this often misunderstood father of the church used the Biblical scheme of divine offer and human response.

The report that Dr. Harry Boer makes on "The Los Angeles Case" will perhaps interest only members of the Christian Reformed Church, but it certainly points up the importance of good order in the church generally.

As We See It

DOLLARS AND SCHOLARS

It may well be that the Constitution does forbid direct federal or state aid to religious schools. On this there is some variety of competent opinion. The "wall of separation" was not very high when our nature was youthful, and some return to school laws beginning with "Sound religion being necessary . . ." is in the air. The problem of the decade ahead, however, is not whether tax aid is Constitutional, nor whether it is consonant with our national origins. The problem is, How can religious schools keep pace without it? And if they cannot, or will not, then have we the eye to discern the fact and the will to act on that discernment?

Poorly financed education is paid for — in other than monetary ways, though in these, too — by the teachers and, even more tragically, by the pupils who are thus short-changed of their precious developmental opportunities. Moreover, it is paid for by the nation which is so far forth robbed of the fruition of talents left dormant and of leadership dead aborning. And if it is Christian schools which fail, it is Christian leadership which is wanting. In this the nation has a stake, and who knows it better than we?

Say, for example, that in a few years it is demonstrated that elementary language or science is best taught by machine. Who will benefit from this fact? Obviously, only those students whose schools have the money for such machines and the trained personnel to use them. If science taught by tape, television, computer, and laboratory is most easily mastered, who will achieve the mastery that leads to scholarships, to research laboratories, to discoveries, to Nobel prizes? There are no equivocal answers to such questions, and no special providences to offer easy way out: only those students whose schools provide them with education via tapes, television, films, computers, modern labs, adequate libraries, new textbooks, competent instructors, sufficient budgets — only these students will win out to leadership. If they come from religious schools, they will give religious as well as intellectual leadership. If not . . . why not? Who failed them? Why?

No slogans will answer these questions.

We steward our goods to provide our Christian schools. Perhaps we can provide all of the money the next decades will demand to keep the Christian schools among the best. Perhaps not. Do we, at all places, provide enough even now?

But we steward also the talents of our children. Had Einstein been born in your home, would your schools have now the pedagogical leadership and tools to mature him? His years or maturation are not long. Will they be spent in crowded, under-equipped classrooms, in a school system more calculated to stamp out than to discern and develop his genius?

And we steward also the future of our nature. We take religion seriously. We do well. But take we it seriously enough to want the Christian schools to grow, wax stronger, reach out farther, claim more scholars and scholarships, be better than the best?

None of these things implies, as such, federal or state aid to religious education. But all of them demand thoughtful consideration of our alternative ways and means. Have we a right *not* to fight for what is *ours*? not to search out Constitutional ways to direct *our own* tax money to *our own* children's future?

—L.D.K.

THAT REPORT ON INFALLIBILITY

A very lengthy report on the nature of Scriptural infallibility will be presented to the coming Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. It would I think be wise for the Synod either to table this report, or reject it without prejudice.

(1) An issue of such complexity ought to receive much longer study than has been alloted to it, and it ought to come under the careful consideration and thought of a far larger group than a single committee. Let the Christian Reformed Church be done with the dubious practice of hastily composing formulations on highly important issues and hastily giving them official and creedal sanction. It is better on doctrinal matters to take no official position at all, than to take one which will live without honor.

(2) The Church ought to declare herself officially only on such doctrinal matters as are live and burning issues in the body of the churches. This cannot be said about the issue of infallibility. The sound and excitement over this issue is restricted to a mere handful of people. Moreover, the question of the nature of Scriptural infallibility is a highly academic subject, one which does not engage the mind of our churches, nor even a tenth of our ministers. In the mind of our churches the question is not even dead – it has never been really alive.

(3) Synods assumedly represent the mind of the churches. Few ministers, and even fewer elders, will be able to digest the long report and to vote on this issue with seasoned conviction. Since official, synodical decisions on doctrinal matters are supposed to be a *confession* of the Church's faith, of what value are decisions which do not even reflect well-informed conviction?

(4) Before we as churches express ourselves on so complex and academic a matter as the nature of Scripture infallibility, we ought first to hear the thought of our expert leadership in the fields in which the question first arises. Let the professors of Old and New Testament studies in Calvin Seminary first declare their positions on this matter. Let them also tell us what positions are held on the question of infallibility by their colleagues in our sister Reformed churches.

In view of these considerations – and others might be added – it would be wise, regardless of the nature of the committee's report, for Synod to table this report, or reject it without prejudice.

Short-order creedal statements gather neither age nor honor. –J.D.

The State and the Christian Schools

by Marion Snapper

MOST CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE accepted the principle of separation of church and state. This principle is applied in many areas. Perhaps it has been applied most notably in recent years in the area of education. The result has been a proliferation of cases in the courts dealing with a wide range of problems. Apparently the "wall of separation" is in need of continued reinforcement. Among the problems dealt with have been released-time religious education, bus transportation and free textbooks for parochial school pupils, reading of the Bible and prayer in the public schools. And in the past few years Christmas and Easter observances have come under scrutiny.

The whole question of separation of church and state in relation to Christian day schools is deserving of continued appraisal and analysis. It seems to me that there has been some over-simplification in most considerations of the relationship between Christian day schools and the government.

In one sense there is separation. But in another sense there is little separation at all. If we view separation in terms of governmental structure and organization, and a strict interpretation of the First Amendment — that is, whether or not any governmental activity resulting from a law passed by Congress tends to establish religion or to prohibit its free exercise — then we must conclude that there is, despite continued problems, a rather clean-cut separation of church and state.

If, however, we view separation in more organismic terms, if American society is seen as a vital organism with all of its activities (government, education, etc.) interrelated as the parts of a body, then the question of separation of church and state with respect to education becomes a more complex problem. My principal concern in this writing is to look at the relation of the Christian day school to government in this way.

FIRST OF ALL IT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THE relationship of *all* American formal education to government. The most incisive and immediately relevant way to do this is by examining that relationship as it is defined in the law of the land.

It is well-known that the Federal Constitution is silent on the subject of education. The reserve clause of that constitution places in the hands of the several states those powers not expressly granted to the federal government. In all states the legisla-

res are recognized to have *plenary* power to deal ith educational matters. This means that every ate legislature has power to do as it pleases, nited only by constitutional (state and federal) ovisions and the power of the electorate over that gislature (election, recall, initiative, referendum). ourt decisions have consistently supported this ower.

The courts have also protected the rights of arents or churches to establish separate schools.[1] his right, however, does not detract from the enary power of the state legislature to control very institution and every individual parent in heir programs to provide formal education for ildren. It should not be concluded that because gislatures generally have been reluctant to exercise gid control, that they have exhausted their plenary ower to do so.

In brief, it is somewhat illusory to conceive of hristian day schools as being autonomous institu- ons.[2] This pleasant illusion may be expected o last until a Christian day school fails to measure p voluntarily to the standards which are estab- shed by the state and local agencies.[3]

Thus, in reality, the state does control all educa- ional institutions which formally educate children. With respect to control, there is really little to istinguish public from Christian day schools, except hat in the latter (a) acceptance of state standards s more voluntary, and (b) the teaching and exercise f religion is not prohibited.

There is, therefore, no absolute separation of hurch and state with respect to control of educa- ion. And this is so because such control rests upon he recognition that *all* educational activities are itally related to the body politic, to the general wel- are of the state. Which leads to the next point.

THE CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL IS ITSELF ENGAGED IN overnmental activity. Political theorists since Plato have recognized that the single most critical ctivity of government is education — the kind of ducation provided for its citizens being recognized s the prime internal determinant of the future of ny government. This is especially obvious in otalitarian states.

It may be said that all education — including Christian day schools — is not merely an activity f government; it is of the essence of government.

> Public education is not merely a function of government; it is of government. Power to maintain a system of public schools is an attribute of government in much the same sense as is the police power or the power to administer justice or to maintain military force or to tax.[4]

This generalization grows out of a large number of legal decisions.

Education is a positive exercise of the police power of the state:

> The prevention of crime and preservation of good order and peace, is the highest exercise of the police power of the state, whether done by punishing offenders or educating children.[5]

In legal theory education is not first of all a privilege; it is first of all a duty to the state:

> While most people regard the public schools as the means of great personal advantage to the pupils, the fact is too often overlooked that they are governmental means of protecting the state from the consequences of an ignorant and incompetent citizenship.[6]

Whether or not the structural ties between the school and the state are clearly evident, education remains the exercise of a governmental function:

> The conduct and maintenance of schools by school directors, school trustees and boards of education is no less an "Exercise of the functions vested in those charged with the conduct of government," is no less a part of the "science and art of government," and deals no less with the "organization, regulation and administration of a State" in its internal affairs, than . . . the performance of many other duties by public officials which, however beneficial to individuals, are not undertaken from philanthropic or charitable motives, but for the protection, safety and welfare of the citizens of the State in the interest of good government.[7]

It may be thought that the above references deal with public education. Whether or not they do is quite incidental to the underlying principle expressed in them. This can be clarified by supposing that the parochial school system of the Roman Catholic Church were to continue its notable growth of past years, and that a day were to come when 60 per cent of the children in the United States were educated under Roman Catholic auspices; it might further be supposed that then 60 per cent of all lawyers, teachers, political scientists, economists, voters and taxpayers would likely be products of a Roman Catholic education from kindergarten through college. At this point one can only speculate concerning all of the consequences such a situation would have for our government.

Although approximately 85 per cent[8] of elementary and secondary school pupils in the United States are in public schools established for the good

1. *Pierce v. Society of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary*, 268 U.S. 510, 45 S. Ct. 751, 39 ALR 468.

2. The degree of apparent autonomy does vary from state to state. The best single source of information on this subject is: F. F. Beach, *The State and Nonpublic Schools* (Washington D. C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1958), 152 pp.

3. *Creyhon v. Board of Education*, 99 Kan. 824, 163 Pac. 145, L.R.A. 1917c 993. *Kayser v. Board of Education*, 273 Mo. 643, 201 S. W. 531.

4. Newton Edwards, *The Courts and the Public Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 23.

5. *Leeper v. State*, 103 Tenn. 500, 53 S.W. 962. 48 L.R.A. 167.

6. *Fogg v. Board of Education*, 76 H.N. 296, 82 Atl. 173, 37 L.R.A. (N.S.) 1110, Ann. Cas. 1912C 758.

7. *Scown v. Czarnecki*, 264 Ill. 305.

of the state, it does not follow that the education of the 15 per cent is not just as significantly (in numerical proportion perhaps) an activity of government — even though it is carried on by indirection of the state. The courts have consistently halted educational activities which appear in any way inimical to the welfare of the state.[9]

It may be contended at this point that there are spheres of sovereignty which operate in American government and society. But the logic of the courts fails to define any clear-cut spheres of sovereignty.

> . . . The legal control of the education function resides in the state. . . . The assumption of control over the education function by the state is a specific delegation of power by a public act of the citizens to the individual state and even on a state level represents in a large sense a partnership between the parents and the state.[10]

In legal decisions involving parents' and children's rights in educational matters the language is that of a jurist walking the razor edge between the rights of the state and the rights of the parent. A logical analysis of an organismic relationship is difficult. But some principle must have priority. Jurisprudence usually follows this order: (1) The welfare of the child; (2) the welfare of the state; (3) the rights of parents. This is evident in the words of Judge Siegler:

> Manifestly, the touchstone of our jurisprudence in matters dealing with the custody and control of infants is the welfare and happiness of the infants. . . . Thus it has been quite generally held that even the natural right of the father to the custody of his child cannot be treated as an absolute property right, but rather as a trust reposed in the father by the state, as *parens patriae* for the welfare of the infant. . .[11]

The judge went on to deny to parents the right to educate their children at home because such an education would not be adequate preparation for good *citizenship*. Quite obviously sphere sovereignty is not the touchstone of jurisprudence in educational matters. We may disagree, but that does not alter the legal framework within which all education is carried on in the United States.

IF CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL EDUCATION IS GOVERNmental activity, and if such education is controlled by the state, either by direction or indirectly, be cause it is governmental activity, then it woul appear that it ought to have financial support fron the state.

It may then be hypothesized that state control i more closely related to assuring state welfare tha to state financial support. And if this be tru then it is somewhat of a moot point as to whethe control follows support. For the present situatio is this: Christian day schools, under direct or in direct state control, are carrying on governmenta activity — *gratis*.

It is safe to predict that efforts in the Unite States functionally to separate church, state, an education will never succeed in resolving the prob lem. The organismic relationship has always bee there; St. Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church and Calvin in Geneva recognized this to varyin degrees and sought to implement this natural rela tionship.

Paradoxically the Calvinistic effort in Geneva failed, at least in part because it assumed a Chris tian society rather than a heterogeneous and de praved society; and the effort at separation in th United States will not succeed because it assume that all Christians will be willing to accept a bifurcation of reality in the education of thei children.

History may well record that separate Christia schools exerted a most critical leavening influenc on American society. It may be demonstrated tha such separatist programs did not represent an ab dication of responsibility to society; rather, they kept alive in the organism the belief that God' claims are universal; the organism never com pletely acceding to the predominant movement t make of "Democracy" the new religion of the state[12] — the ultimate criterion of right and wrong, of good and evil.

As this is being written, the question of federa support of education is once again a lively issue Most political analysts consider it only a matter o time before some broad program of federal suppor is instituted, but there is little agreement among those analysts as to whether such support will b extended to private and parochial elementary an secondary schools.

There is rapidly growing evidence to indicat that the latter question will not be answered on th basis of the superficially neat logic of "separatio of church and state"; or "Education is the respon sibility of the parent rather than of the state" or "This is good for Roman Catholicism and there fore bad for us"; or "Federal support means federa control."

These neat logical distinctions are crumblin under the pressure of national and world event

8. "Total public and nonpublic enrollment is estimated at 42.7 million for the 1959-60 school year. Of this total, 36.2 million are enrolled in public schools and 6.5 million are enrolled in non-public schools. Since the school year 1934-40 enrollments in non-public schools have increased from 9.4 to 15.2 per cent of total enrollment." R. L. Hunt, "Religion and Education," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 332:93, (November 1960), citing *Health, Education and Welfare Trends* (Washington D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 56.

9. *People v. American Socialist Society*, 195 N.Y.S. 801, 202 App. Div. 640.

10. *Andrus v. Hill*, 249 p. (2d) 205, 73 Idoha 196 (1952).

11. *Stephens v. Bongart*, 15 N.J. Misc. 80, 189 A. 131.

12. Martin E. Marty, *The New Shape of American Religio* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), Ch. 4.

and under the growing realization that private and parochial education is an integral, vital activity of the body politic — the thesis of the first part of this article.

THE MOST RAPID CRUMBLING OF THE OLD CATEGORIES is taking place in relation to education at the college level. The theme of the 1961 convention of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education was "Unity in Diversity."[13] Following are three quotations from successive major addresses given at that convention.

Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame:

> Private schools now enroll only 40 per cent of all college enrollees and may handle only 20 per cent by 1971. . . . Public institutions must assume one of two basic attitudes. They may stand by, fattened by increasing tax subsidies, and allow the private schools to wither and die from practically unbeatable competition. Or they may declare that private schools have been a healthy influence and not stand in the way of tax, scholarship and loan opportunities proposed for private institutions.

Henry F. Hill, President of George Peabody College and President of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education:

> We need to rearrange our prejudices and be willing to consider the question of state or federal support of students in private colleges. Unless we do reconsider our position, it is going to be difficult for the independent college to continue on terms satisfactory to them and to us.

Henry T. Heald, President of the Ford Foundation:

> The changes in the structure of higher education must be toward the strengthening of the structure as a whole, and not simply for rearranging existing strength by favoring one part at the expense of another. . . . The needs for well educated . . . manpower are so great that all sectors of our diversified system of higher education need expansion and increased support.

Dr. Heald went on to say that he expected to see the distinctions between publicly controlled and privately controlled institutions continue to fade as a basis for receiving state aid. The advisory committee to the legislature of the state of New York, of which he is a member, recommended this year that the state help pay tuition for students attending high-cost private colleges.

There was a widely shared sense of urgency among these diverse speakers and among one thousand delegates. The urgency was this, Almost suddenly affluent American society is faced with a frightening shortage of the most important resource any nation possesses — people. In the face of the mounting tide from the Asian land mass every human talent must be developed. The old labels (e.g., religious, public, private) don't mean much.

13. Thirteenth annual meeting of the Association held in Chicago, Ill., February 22-25, 1961.

Suddenly the "either-or" becomes this, Either we value diversity in American education and subsidize it, or we choke it out by further widening the gap, decimating private education until it ceases to exert its traditional challenging influence and becomes a vestigial organ in the body politic.

In my opinion it is only a matter of time until the logic of human and world affairs forces the same approach to secondary and elementary private and parochial education. The present distinction between the various levels of education is an administrative one. Increasingly it is being understood that the kind of education received in the elementary school is just as critical as the kind of education received at any other level. One or two more hitches in the American belt and the 15 per cent of America's children being educated in private and parochial schools will be as critical to the national welfare as the 40 per cent being educated in nonpublic colleges is today.

This argument rests on an assumption that in the years ahead elementary and secondary nonpublic schools will not be able to continue to provide a comparatively high-quality education without being subsidized in some form or other by the state. It is not difficult to defend that assumption but the task falls beyond the scope of this article.

WHAT SHOULD OUR CHRISTIAN ELEMENTARY AND secondary schools be doing in relation to this whole problem? Some proposals seem to stand out.

(1) Our Christian schools must not assume some sort of self-perpetuating, automatic superiority in all areas of education by virtue of the fact that they are Christian schools. A few questions will illustrate what is meant. Are *qualified* people teaching chemistry, English, physics, Latin, etc. in our high schools? Are outstanding scholars in the various disciplines going into secondary and elementary teaching? Our Christian schools must hold a reputation for being leaders in the quest for excellence. The person who thinks that American public education is still wallowing in the ease era is mistaken. The Christian schools must establish such a reputation that in the future they will be counted as being worthy of perpetuation — as the Christian colleges are doing today.

(2) Our secondary educational leaders should participate actively at the policy-making levels of American education as the leaders of private colleges are doing. Those who have attended conventions of various education associations may think that it is virtually impossible to break into the power structure. But that is no excuse for not being in attendance and doing all possible both to learn and to be heard. Schools boards should make it possible for administrators and teachers to attend public as well as Christian school conventions. Many of them do.

(3) We should not believe that the greatest danger to Protestant Christian education is Roman Catholicism. We should recognize that the greater danger is from pressures to homogenize all education below the college level and to make of our schools a great universal temple of the Cult of Democracy.

(4) The cause of Christian education must learn how to preserve its uniqueness while accepting the state subsidy necessary to its continuance. It must learn now already how to accept National Defense Education (disconcerting adjectives) money in support of Christian liberal arts education. We hold to the principle that education is the responsibility of parents. But we must learn to understand that this principle does not proscribe support from sources other than parents' pocketbooks. Rathe than tossing around the generalization, "Contro follows support," we must note that in America history federal support of education (and there ar over three billion Federal dollars spent annuall already)[14] has not been followed by harmful con trol, nor has it had any clearly detrimental effects And if we are resorting to the argument that stat support will lessen zeal and commitment to th cause of Christian education, then it is high tim that we examine the nature of our present com mitment.

14. Hollis P. Allen, *The Federal Government and Educatio* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), p. 35. (The origina and complete study of education for the Hoover Commissio Task Force on Public Welfare)

All the World's A Stage

by J. D. Eppinga

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and their entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts.

WE RECOGNIZE THESE WORDS. IN FACT, WE OFTEN quote them. But have we ever well considered the sound theology these lines contain? Truly, the world is a stage. The curtain is open. And the drama is great, being written and directed by God Himself. It is likewise true that the men and women are the players. It is precisely on this point that we can register a thought.

All the men and women players? I wonder if our lives show that we really agree with that? So often we behold the church, and so often do we behold the men and women in the church in all they do and say, and we conclude that there are some at least who would try to rewrite Shakespeare; who would take the word "players" and substitute for it the word "spectators." Like this:

All the world's a stage
And we men and women in the church are
merely spectators.

Of course, when we rewrite Shakespeare in this manner, we are actually not rewriting Shakespeare at all but, in fact, rewriting the Bible. And this is wrong.

I would tell you of a man who tried this. He wished to be a spectator, not an actor. He wasn't very successful in his attempt, for God was continually calling him out of his box seat and yanking him front and center.

The name of the man was Jonah. We know his story well. He lived at the time of Amos th prophet, who was a great man. His home was i the north kingdom — the kingdom of Israel — a a time in history which was a very crucial tim in history for the purposes of God. Thus, livin at the time of Amos, in the north kingdom — that is to say, right where world events wer shaping the things that were to come — Jona had a box seat; a tremendous vantage point fro which to view the unfolding drama of the histor of the day. In this respect, of course, we are no unlike this man of old. For we too live in a crucia time in one of the leading nations of the earth. W too have a tremendous vantage point, even greate than this man of old. With our various news medi we may see and know even from hour to hour th latest moves and developments upon that stag which is the world.

But the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, th son of Amittai, saying: "Arise, get thee up t Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, fo their wickedness is come up before Me."

The picture these words create is an interestin one. Jonah was comfortable in his box seat. Th play that was unfolding before his eyes was mos engrossing. He changed his position to get mor comfortable, even whispered to himself: "It's great time to be alive."

But at this point the proceedings were momen tarily interrupted, as the director, God Himself appearing from the wings and pointing over th foot lights at Jonah, said: "Jonah, arise, come u here. I want you to play a part. It's not a ver

ig part — it's not a very fat role — but it's an im-ortant part. Jonah, arise."

It's interesting at this point to speculate — to nvestigate the psychology of this moment. What ent on in Jonah's mind? What a shocking thing was for him — called upon to change his role rom spectator to actor! How would we react in a imilar situation, especially if we were of a retiring ature, as Jonah seemed to be.

But rather than speculate, let us consider what ook place. What happened was this: Jonah arose: ut instead of moving front and center, he went to ne rear. He tried to hide in the balcony. The hole book of Jonah — his taking a ship and being ssed overboard, and being swallowed by a great sh from which he was cast upon the shore — ll of that was really this struggle between God, ying to get Jonah to act a part, and the man imself, trying to remain a spectator.

What was the end of the matter? Man cannot sist God. Of course, Jonah played the part. He reached to the city. Yet, though Jonah played is role, nevertheless, the desire in him to be a pectator and not an actor was so deep seated that the first opportunity Jonah was back in his box eat. Row A. Seat 1. Section 1.

That this is true can be proved by turning to a rtain verse taken from the book of Jonah. It found in chapter 4, verse 5. Here it is: "So nah went out of the city" (that is to say, after had preached), "and there made him a booth, nd sat under it in the shadow, till he might see hat would become of the city." So, there he as, you understand, back in the role of spectator. All the city of Nineveh is a stage," said Jonah, nd I'm a spectator."

Strange, isn't it, how deep this is found within all — the desire to "spectate"? It's a trait at comes out especially in an affluent society such ours. The ancient Romans filled the Colosseum. o do we today. Americans love to be spectators; merica, I read sometime ago, is a spectator na-on. Think of baseball, to mention just one exam-le. How many went through the stadium turn-iles last season? About as many as the year fore. Millions! Said *Sports Illustrated* sometime o: "Baseball is the great national pastime it is cause it is the greatest spectator sport we have." e love to buy the tickets, you see. And sit back. nd view.

Or, consider football. Wherever it is played season, the stands are filled and the parking lots e jammed. Inclement weather seems to make no rticular difference. For the elements, you see, ough they seemingly prevent men from wor-ipping, have a harder time to stop men from pectating." Baseball, football, movies, and plays from mainfloor to balcony — the seats are al-ys filled.

Or, take television. It's kind of shocking to hear, as I heard from an expert sometime ago, that the average adult in America spends approximately twenty hours a week in front of his TV set. If one works an eight-hour day, this represents two and a half days! That's a lot of viewing — of "spectating." Much of the time we spend with newspapers and news magazines is really the same thing. Remember the television debates in the last presidential campaign? How many watched? Seventy million? The estimates ran higher than that.

What are we trying to say? That it's wrong to go to a baseball park or watch a television show, or read a newspaper, or see a play? Certainly not! There is nothing wrong with that as such. Some of this is even necessary and advisable. Yet, at the same time, it is important that we be thoughtful, and that we be careful on this score, lest we take our viewing, our watching, our observing — or if you will — our "spectating" and make of this a *way of life.* There are many, I suppose, who would rather watch baseball than play the game. Yet, when it comes to life, we may not do the same. It is precisely here, however, that many — in the church too — make their great mistake, as they would rather watch life than play a part in it; would rather watch history than take a role in its information; would rather be commentators than actors; would rather be analysts than players; like Jonah. God had given him a lesson in this whole regard. One could say, an unforgettable lesson! Yet, in the end, it appeared that even that unforgettable lesson had been lost on him when, after having preached, he raced back to his box seat as fast as he could go; for "Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city."

The thought has often occurred, on reading this text, that here is a verse of Scripture that, with a few changes here and there, could be brought up to date and thus turned into a powerful indictment against so many. "Jonah went out of the city." Change that to: "He moved to the suburbs." "In the east side of the city." Change that to: "On east-side suburbia." "And there made him a booth." Change that to: "And there he built himself a ranch type or a split-level home." "And sat under it in the shadow." Change that to: "He planted some nice trees on his lot." "Till he might see what would become of the city." And you can change that any way you like. Make it: "And there he read his newspaper comfortably every day." Now let us read the entire text brought up to date: "And Jonah moved to the suburbs, the east-side suburbs, and he built himself a nice little ranch house, landscaped his lot with shrubbery and trees, subscribed to *Newsweek* and the *New York Times,* and let the rest of the world go by." Jonah

4:5. Of course, there is nothing wrong with *Newsweek* or the suburbs. Yet, now the text becomes a bit disturbing! At least it should!

Reference was made to the presidential campaign of last year. It may serve as a further illustration. For weeks and months the political campaign was observed with more than average interest. People listened to the candidates, watched them on television, and weighed all the speeches and opinions. And so for the most part, watched and observed, listened and reacted. The public viewed, viewed with approbation, with alarm, with concern, and just plain viewed for days and weeks and months. But there came a day when Uncle Sam pointed the finger at all who were eligible to vote and said, "Now you have been spectator long enough. Arise, and go to the polling booths and vote." How wrong and how unAmerican if none had responded, if none had heeded. And true, some did not respond, but others, a great many, did, and cast their votes for the men and parties of their choice. Fine.

But now let us ask: Isn't being a Christian something like this, and doesn't being a Christian involve something similar? Yet there are Christians in America who would think it a terrible thing if they did not arise and vote because Uncle Sam was pointing his finger at them, who yet do not arise when God points His finger at them, telling them that they must arise, activate themselves, and be actors upon this world's stage, and not merely spectators. All too often Christians are with Jonah, sitting in the shade, seeing what will happen to the city and to the world, talking about it and making predictions and going to their churches, and listening to sermons about how terrible things are and how they are getting worse — and agreeing. Yet doing nothing! Spectators. Not actors. Reading the news. Not making it.

Abraham lived in Ur of Chaldees, probably in the suburbs too. But the word of the Lord came to Abraham and said, "Abraham, arise." And he did. He became an actor on this world's stage, and he played his part quite well.

And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah in the days of Josiah, saying, "Arise." And he did. And God came to Moses, comfortably ensconced in the palace, saying, "Arise." Yes, and Christ came to Peter, to James and to John, and He said to these and others, "Arise, follow me." And they followed Him and wrote history! But I wonder how that history would read had Abraham, and Moses, and Jeremiah, and Peter, James and John tried to move into Jonah's neighborhood every chance they had. How often that word appears in Scripture — "Arise," play a part. Yet how few give heed. Many Christians are just too comfortable being spectators. It is, therefore, well to ask: "How vital a role are we playing as individuals, and how vital a role are we playing as churches? D we perhaps spend most of our time in just viewin with alarm, viewing with approbation, viewin with concern — or whatever it is — but just view ing?

Too many of us are with Jonah. Wonder wha they are going to do about the race problem? W don't do anything much about it, we merely observ It's really a shame, all this pornography we fin in the magazine racks in our town. Why don *they* do something about that? Meanwhile, som of us do nothing. We merely view the situatio with alarm. What a lot of lonely old people ther are in our town, in rest homes and convalescen homes. Somebody ought to start some kind o visiting program! Make this a town with a heart Of course, those who render such exclamations d nothing except just watch. "Television program and the cinema are getting worse and worse, a that killing and shooting and sex." People ough to do something to raise the level. Even the best i only mediocre. Meanwhile, we don't even write on letter to a network. We're with Jonah. We'r going to see what happens. We don't want to mis a thing. And so we see it all. Godlessness, juve nile delinquency, social problems, selfishness, powe lust, divorces — we see it all, but what do we do

There are many who are doing things. God bles them! Christians too. It is equally true, howeve that there are many who are followers of Chris who are not following Christ, who are with Jonah sitting, watching, to see what will happen to th city, to the world.

"And Jonah moved to the suburbs, and bui himself a nice little ranch house, landscaped hi lot with shrubbery and trees, subscribed to *News week* and the *New York Times,* and let the rest o the world go by." Jonah 4:5. Surely, we have duty to ask whether we individually or collectivel fall, either wholly or in part, under the sweep o these words. We thank God that He has saved us saved us through the blood of Christ from all ou sins, saved us for the next world, which by Hi grace, is ours. But let us remember that He ha also saved us for this world, to be active in it, t be a salt, to be an influence, to sound His word, t be a witness.

Let us remember how He said, "He that heareth these words of mine and doeth them. . . ."

Rewriting Shakespeare is dangerous. Who ca improve on that master of the pen? Yet eac Christian would do well to paraphrase, and t make the paraphrase a prayer.

All the world's a stage,
And I must be a player on that stage.
I'll have my exit — had my entrance,
Let me now then play a part.
Lord, direct and prompt me,
Give me the lines to speak.

"I Wrote My Gospel for the Sake of a Friend" *

by John Calvin Reid

LL BEGIN WITH A QUESTION. If you had a friend, nly very dear to you personally, but a man of such cal prominence and influence that his conversion l greatly strengthen the cause of Christianity in orld, what would you do and how far would you an effort to lead him to make a wholehearted com- ent to Christ?

had such a friend, and my book, known to you as Gospel According to Luke" (and the Book of as well), is the answer I gave to this very ion.

For the depth of my own Christian experience, I was y indebted to the Apostle Paul. For, in the provi- of God, it had been my privilege to be his com- n and personal physician on the majority of his onary journeys. I have a vivid recollection of the first joined his party. It was in a city by the name oas, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea, better n to you as the Straits of the Dardanelles. This around A.D. 50. Paul and his assistant, Silas, just completed a tour of the newly founded ches in Phrygia and Galatia — the region now n to you as the nation of Turkey. It was Paul's in- on to proceed eastward toward Asia, but the Holy t directed him westward instead — so they came to Troas, where I met them.

That night, in a dream, Paul saw a man from Mace- a, a province of Greece, standing with outstretched s, pleading: "Come over into Macedonia and help Paul interpreted this as a direct revelation of God's so the next morning we set sail in the direction of ce — which, of course, was also in the direction of e and Spain, and ultimately of Great Britain and rica. In other words, but for that vision which ed Paul and his missionary party westward instead stward, it might have been China and India where the Gospel would have been preached, instead of pe, with the possible result that today Christian ionaries might be coming from those lands to you in America, instead of going from America to a and India.

So that vision of Paul at Troas and his response to it was one of the turning points in Church history. It meant that the first tide of world evangelism flowed westward toward America rather than eastward toward Asia. Have you ever thanked God for that providential turn in events, and have you ever weighed the responsibility which rests upon you because you were thus favored? "To whom much is given, of him will much be required!"

But back to my story. From Troas we sailed the next day for Philippi, and from that time on I was a regular member of Paul's missionary party. I served not only as physician, but as historian — making notes in my journal concerning our experiences in the various cities we visited.

I was with Paul not only when he preached in the cities of Greece, but also later when he returned to Jerusalem to deliver in person to the Christians there the special offering which he had collected in the churches of Galatia and Achaia. In Jerusalem, you will recall, he was set upon by a mob of Jewish fanatics and probably would have been killed but for the quick intervention of a Roman centurion and his troops.

Later, standing before the tribunal of the Roman governor, Festus, Paul, realizing that he was not receiving a fair trial, squared his shoulders and claimed his right as a Roman citizen: "I appeal unto Caesar."

Not many days after, we sailed for Rome — Paul a prisoner, I still his companion, physician, and journalist. On the way we encountered a terrific storm. The ship was driven against a shoal, and eventually pounded to pieces. But under the providence of God, no lives were lost — and in due time we arrived in Rome.

Two years later, Paul's case came to trial before the emperor but was promptly dismissed for lack of evidence. Upon his release, he lost no time in setting out upon another missionary journey. But his freedom was to be of short duration. Within five years the Roman emperor himself — his name was Nero — turned against the Christians and by his order Paul was arrested and brought back to Rome. The same emperor, who a few years earlier had thrown his case out of court, now ordered him to be beheaded. I was with him during his last hours when, calmly facing his fate, he took his pen in hand and wrote his immortal words of farewell to his young friend Timothy:

> For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the

*This piece is taken from the recent book entitled *We Wrote the Gospels* by John Calvin Reid, published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960. $2.00. In a coming issue the *Journal* will present the imaginative personal account of John. Dr. Reid is minister of the Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing — II Timothy 4:6-8 (RSV).

These facts I have recounted that you might understand how much I was influenced and helped, both as an author and as an individual believer, by the personality and the theology of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. You see, perhaps no one was closer to him than I. During our missionary activities together, he called me endearingly his "fellow worker," his "beloved physician." I was completely devoted to him and, by virtue of his influence, friendship, and example, not less devoted to the cause for which he gave his life.

His martyrdom, as well as that of Peter (both took place in Rome under Nero's reign), marked and highlighted a new and critical period in the history of the Christian Church. For the first thirty or thirty-five years after the death of Jesus, the Church had encountered no opposition whatsoever from the Roman government. During this period it was the Jews, not the Romans, who were behind all the hostility and persecution to which the Christians were subjected. But beginning with Nero, around A.D. 64, there followed, one after the other, ten terrific waves of persecution and martyrdom, lasting for nearly half a century. I lived through the horror of some of those days when Christians were cut down by Roman swords, burned at the stake, or thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheater, for no other reason than their refusal to kneel, or to burn incense, before the image of the emperor. I myself escaped, due to the fact, I suppose, that on the one hand I was a Roman citizen, and on the other a physician, rather than a preaching missionary. But it all seemed so *senseless* to me — cruel and heartless, but also groundless and unreasonable, so out of character for Rome, traditionally the champion of law and order and justice and freedom of religion.

The Jews had been granted official sanction for their religion by Roman decree. Why should the same government seek to stamp out Christianity? The Christians were no menace to the empire, they were not political revolutionaries, not subversives! What an everlasting shame upon Rome, what a travesty of justice to crucify a man like Peter, to behead a man like Paul! Would the senseless slaughter never cease? What could anyone do to turn the tide? Was there perhaps something which I might do?

Could the pen perhaps become mightier than the sword? If the truth about Christianity only could be presented in such a way as to catch the Roman ear and to stay the Roman hand! Obviously the Christians were the victims of too many fantastic rumors and false charges. They needed a friend at court, a lawyer, a man with the gift of logic and reason to espouse their cause, to argue their case, and to document it with carefully chosen facts.

I resolved to attempt to be that man, to undertake to write an "apologetic," a logical treatise in defense of Christian faith.

As I began to organize my material, I saw th would require two volumes.

In the first, I decided to deal with the origin of new faith as seen in the person and work of Jesu up to and including His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension. In my second volume, as I planned would deal with the spread of Christianity throug the empire under the preaching of Peter and Paul other faithful witnesses. I hoped thereby to conv any and every reasonable person — especially Roman positions of political authority — that Christianity worthy of acceptance and protection and did not des hostility and persecution.

This is where my friendship for Theophilus en the picture. His Greek name — as you may kno means "Friend of God." He was worthy of that name at heart he was a religious man, a sincere seeker a truth. As such he was deeply impressed by the teac and preaching of men like Paul and felt a strong i nation to declare himself a Christian.

But he faced a political as well as a personal p lem, for, you see, he held an official position under Roman emperor. And now that the stated policy the emperor was one of opposition and persecution ward the Christian enterprise, Theophilus found self torn between his duty to the empire on the one h and his impression of, and inclination toward, the Ch tian faith on the other. How could he be Caes governor and Christ's servant at one and the s time? As his friend, I understood his dilemma an my book undertook to help him resolve it.

In my mind throughout was this conviction: Theophilus, as a Roman governor, could be led accept and to champion Christianity, then others similar positions might be led to do likewise, with result that the terrible persecutions might ease, eventually cease, with the sword of Caesar no lon turned against Christ.

It was some twenty years after the martyrdom Paul, which occurred around A.D. 67, before I finis my first volume and sent it to Theophilus. Much of time I had spent in careful research. I had talked the Apostles and other eyewitnesses who had kn Christ in the flesh. In addition, I had listened to words of Paul and other missionaries as they had g to and fro teaching and preaching about Jesus. A I had my journal, written while I traveled with P as his missionary companion. From various source had collected brief written accounts of things d and said by Jesus during His earthly ministry.

Then, just before my book reached its final fo I was most fortunate in securing an invaluable ma script written some twenty years earlier by a yo Christian in the church at Rome whose name was J Mark. For a number of years he had been secretary interpreter for Peter. The relationship between

had been quite similar to that which had existed ween Paul and me.

It was with these materials in hand that I wrote Theophilus a careful and orderly account of all that s began to do and to teach until the day when He taken up into the heaven. God prepared the way Him, I reminded Theophilus, even before He was , by sending an angel to announce His birth and significance of it to His mother. On the day of His n, the angel came again — this time announcing hepherds as they kept watch over their flock by t: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good s of a great joy which will come to all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, is Christ the Lord."

The earthly parents of Jesus, as I made clear to ophilus, were not only devout spiritually, but also lient subjects to Roman authority as witnessed by fact that when the decree went out from Caesar ustus that all the world should be enrolled — the pose to levy a new tax — even though Mary's Child soon to be born, still the two of them traveled all way from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to the city Bethlehem in Judea — a forty-mile journey — in dience to the decree. It was this submission of theirs Roman authority that caused the Child Jesus to be n in a stable in Bethlehem rather than in the home His mother in Nazareth.

And Jesus, grown to manhood, aspired to no position worldly power or authority. On the contrary, He nitely turned His back upon such things in His temp- on experience in the wilderness. There He was shown he kingdoms of this world and the glory of them as an said to Him: "To you I will give all this authority their glory . . . . If you . . . will worship me." His answer was a definite and final "No" — "It is tten 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him shall you serve.'"

I then recounted how Jesus, with this decision still h in His mind, came to His home town of Nazareth preached His first sermon in the synagogue there. s might fittingly be called His "inaugural message," He spoke not as a political revolutionary, but as a ler and helper of the poor, significantly choosing as text the words of Isaiah:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Further, I pointed out over and over again that us made a most favorable impression upon the Roman horities with whom He came into personal contact. example, there was the centurion who resided in ernaum, whose servant Jesus healed. So deeply im- ssed was Jesus with this centurion that He said to the multitude that followed Him: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

Still more significant was the testimony of the centurion in charge of His crucifixion. Having watched Jesus die, having heard Him pray on the cross for the forgiveness of His enemies, having heard Him pray again concerning Himself, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," this Roman, as I recorded, praised God and said, "Certainly, this man was innocent!"

This, too, unquestionably, was the conviction of the Roman governor before whom He was tried. Not once, but three times Pilate had said, as I quoted him: "I find no crime in this man." Do not misunderstand me — in my eyes Pilate was no hero. He was a coward, a man who yielded to political pressure and who was more concerned about popularity than principle. He was the complete opposite of the man I hoped and prayed that Theophilus would become. It was clear to me — and this I made emphatic in my Gospel — that, from the beginning of the trial to the end, Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. The charge that He stirred up the people, that He was plotting a revolt against Rome, that Pilate, if he released Him, would not be Caesar's friend, was as ridiculous as it was absurd!

As positive evidence that Jesus was submissive rather than hostile to Roman authority, I quoted Him as teaching: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

Still more significant in this connection was the incident I recounted near the close of Jesus' ministry when His enemies, setting a trap for Him, asked Him the loaded question: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" To this question Jesus gave the straightforward answer: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." What fault could Caesar find with that? Clearly Rome had no reason to fear or oppose this man or His teachings!

But in writing Theophilus, I was not content with defending Christ and His cause from false and malicious charges. Accentuating the positive, I recounted various incidents in which the power of Jesus for good was seen in the conversion and the transformation of individual lives.

One example I cited was that of Simon Peter. Before he became acquainted with Jesus, he was a coarse, profane fisherman. But one day, deeply moved as a result of one of Jesus' miracles, he fell at his Master's feet and cried: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But Jesus, answering Peter's need rather than his prayer, did not depart — never did He depart — but rather proved Himself to be a Savior who, having loved His own, loved him even to the end — through courageous confession, presumptuous boasting and base denial — until at last the unstable Simon had become Peter the rock.

Another example I cited was that of Zacchaeus, a

rich tax collector, whose life was so changed by one contact with Jesus that he declared: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."

I also recounted the story of the conversion of the robber who died on a cross beside Jesus and who by that one contact was moved to pray: "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power"; and to whom Jesus replied: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Over against these characters, and others like them, whose lives Jesus captivated by His magnetism and transformed by His grace, I sketched by way of contrast the lives of those who opposed or rejected Him.

Two Herods — one who sought to destroy Jesus when He was still an infant; the other who did behead His prophetic forerunner, John the Baptist, and who later treated Jesus with extreme contempt as he allowed his soldiers to mock Him and spit upon Him.

In recounting these and other similar incidents in which Jesus was misunderstood, opposed, and abused, I was saying to Theophilus indirectly: "Would you want your name to be associated with these, the enemies of Jesus? Do you want posterity to remember you as having been on the side of those who spied upon Him, plotted against Him, and at last succeeded in nailing Him to a cross? It was these same Jewish leaders and their successors who later stoned Stephen, threw the apostles into prison, and stirred up the mob in Jerusalem agai Paul. Surely, Theophilus," I was saying, "you do want to be counted among this company? Or to have y name linked with that of Judas who betrayed Christ thirty pieces of silver, or with that of Pilate who wash his hands when he should have exerted them?"

Thus, you see, on page after page of my Gospe reminded Theophilus that in making his decision for against Christ he would be making a decision also as the names with which his would be associated and membered. I was pleading with him whose name me "Friend of God" to become also the "Friend of Je Christ," to link his name as well as his soul to that the Savior of the world, for both time and eternity.

Originally, as you know, there was only one c of my Gospel, the one I wrote in Greek with my o hand and sent to my esteemed friend. Today in English language alone there are thousands upon th sands of copies, one of which no doubt you yourself o

For this, of course, you are indebted to Theophi as well as to me. Had he resented my book or disappro of it as he read it, he could and would have destroyed The fact that, instead, it later became the cherished p session of the Church indicates the kind of welcome received from Theophilus earlier. Theophilus beca Christophilus! And it is my hope and prayer that y too, reading its pages as "a friend of God," will a be, or become, "a friend of Christ."

Recovering A Historical Revelation

by Simon J. De Vries

CHRISTIANITY HAS INHERITED A HISTORICAL VIEW OF revelation. We Christians believe that the divine revelation found in the Bible has been mediated historically, that is, through the life and experience of a particular historical people, Israel, and that it culminates in that most unique historical appearance, Jesus Christ. God made use of all of Israel's ordinary human experiences, of all their cultural and historical involvements, even of their sin, error, and suffering, in order to teach them lessons of eternal validity and convey to them (and through them) a revelation of His will for mankind. We realize that the writers of Scripture were finite men of flesh and blood, very much akin to their listeners and readers. The Mediator Himself was, according to the flesh, very much a Jew, a true son of Hebrew culture, speaking to His countrymen as one of their own, though he was far more than merely one of their own.

This is to say that in His marvelous way, the infinite, eternal God gave His saving truth through finite, historical processes. We are familiar with anthropomorphisms, the descriptions of the ineffable God in human terms, so common in the Bible. In a sense the entire Bible is one great anthropomorphism, in which the eternal and transcendent God approaches His creatures in a temporal and immanent framework, speaking to them in language they can understand, that is, in their own terminology and according to their own limited conceptions. It is this that makes the exegesis of Scripture necessary.

I

WE CAN MORE FULLY APPRECIATE THE MARVEL OF this genuinely historical revelation when we look at the wooden theory the Mohammedans believe in. They say that at one given moment in time, at a particular place, an angel dictated the Quran to their Prophet, word for word. That is, their sacred Book came full-blown from heaven; it was a direct penetration or irruption into the finite world by an

tterly transcendent message from the Almighty. slam has no Mediator; Islam has no historical revetion, it is a religion of sheer transcendence.

We discover a tendency toward this same conception of revelation in some of the inter-testamental literature, as in the *Assumption of Moses*, where he Torah is said to have been prepared in perfection in heaven before being given to Moses — who vas thus not its author but only its guardian. This s in effect also the way in which Joseph Smith said ie received the Book of Mormon: an angel showed im where it lay buried; all he had to do was read t with the supernatural glasses the angel provided.

Christian believers of simplistic mind are tempted o adopt a view of revelation greatly akin to this concept. They acknowledge in theory that there were human authors involved in the process, but in effect this matters little. John and Luke, and the other writers who penned the words, are of little practical importance; the only one who really counts is the Primary Author, God. This view has great attraction for the simplistic mind: if it were left to it to decide what kind of sacred Book it would prefer, it would choose one that came directly from heaven, one that is simply and clearly the Book of God, like the Quran.

Reformed theologians have understood, of course, that this concept is an utter distortion. We have to take the Bible for what it really is — the embodiment of a *historical* revelation — not for what we might prefer it to be. Reformed thought has therefore rejected the mechanical theory of inspiration and has set forth the doctrine of organic inspiration. By this is meant that the Primary Author of Scripture made full use of all the historical, psychological, and literary conditions in which each of the Biblical writers were involved, in order to make known in a progressive way (leading to Christ) His eternal truth.

The trouble is that some have often failed to do real justice to this doctrine of organic inspiration. Thus, very often when the human and cultural aspect of Scripture has been elaborated, conservatives have cried in alarm, thinking that the divine authority of Scripture was being challenged. The rise of rationalistic criticism has, of course, rightly put conservative Christianity on its guard in this crucial matter. Modernism, and the humanistic thinking associated with it, has denied the supernatural aspect of Biblical revelation, making the Bible a purely human book. But in their effort to defend the supernatural, conservatives have often allowed themselves to be driven into the opposite error of doing injustice to the finite, human, historical aspect of revelation, in contradiction to their theory and in contradiction to what the Bible plainly shows itself to be.

Christian thought has been involved here in a perplexing dilemma, a dilemma inherent in the very concept of revelation, namely, that of the Infinite God revealing Himself to finite man in understandable (that is, necessarily finite) forms. We may be sure, however, that God intended it this way. Believers are challenged to embrace this dilemma in sheer and simple faith, without striving to resolve it rationalistically.

All who are of rationalistic, simplistic, or authoritarian inclination swing inevitably to one extreme or the other. It is not only the Humanist and the Modernist who do this: the humanistic rationalist sees nothing but man, history, culture; the fundamentalist rationalist, on the other hand, thinks he sees only God — or cares to see only God. Now, without debating which error is the worse, for both are bad, we observe that both have fallen into the trap of oversimplifying what needs to be left by all means in dialectical tension. Oversimplification is bound to minimize either God's role or man's because it fails to understand how these two can appear together in the same reality. Indeed, how can the Bible be both completely divine and completely human at the same time? This is a stunning paradox. We do not need to expect that feeble man will ever fully comprehend this; we are only to believe it. The question is, will we accept God's revelation for what it really is? Will we accept this paradox, or will we attempt to destroy it?

Let us remember that the Bible also requires us to believe the tremendous paradox that Jesus Christ was both fully divine and fully human, that is, truly infinite and truly finite, at the same time. It also teaches that God is absolutely sovereign in every human act, for which our wills are yet freely and fully responsible.

Far from detracting from the glory of divine transcendence, the human dimension only increases it. The more clearly we see the real humanity of the Mediator, the more we may stand in awe of His divinity. The more we accept full moral responsibility, the more we marvel at the wisdom of divine sovereignty. And the more we appreciate the real historicalness of Scripture, the more we may rejoice in its validity as supernatural revelation. I do not know whether we could really respect a Bible that came as the Quran is said to have come. For superstitious minds such a Bible might have great appeal. But to worship truly God's infinite wisdom and power, we need to respect the great mystery of a genuinely historical revelation.

II

MANY PEOPLE SEEM UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH between scriptural infallibility and scriptural inerrancy. The two are not the same. A recognition of the real meaning of a historical revelation cuts

the ground from under those who insist — often with great emotion — that an infallible Bible must be inerrant. If the Bible really has been mediated through finite, fallible men, should we not *expect* shortcomings and misunderstandings, both in the form and in the material of their recording of that revelation?

This question comes quite apart from two others that have to be asked: whether the Bible really does teach that it is inerrant in its human aspect as some say; and whether there actually are, or are not, real mistakes. Both of these questions have to be asked honestly, and with humble acquiescence to what painstaking, unbiased exegesis (not *eis*egesis — reading our preconceptions into the Bible) tells us. The church may not avoid its responsibility to investigate these problems carefully. The dignity of God's Word demands it.

But for the present let us consider only the first question. Should we not expect errors, shortcomings, mistakes — call them what you will — as a mark of the human mediation of God's revelation? If devoted scholarship should inform us that there really are mistakes or irreconcilable discrepancies, is there anything in our acknowledgement of historical revelation that would prevent us from accepting their verdict? What does it mean to be human? The human mind never possesses absolute truth on any subject. It is bound to err in some degree. As long as we men are finite, whatever we do or say will be characterized by failure to understand fully. No man possess omniscience, not even when serving as a vehicle of God's revelation. To err is nothing but a condition of our finitude. Finite man can never possess perfect or absolute knowledge. As such, there is no moral culpability in being prone to error; although the blindness of error is intensified by sin, in itself it is only an intellectual, not an ethical, shortcoming.

Our trouble comes from failing to keep clear in our minds that miscalculation may be ascribed only to the human aspect of Scripture. This does not in any way impugn Scripture's validity as infallible divine revelation; we are simply holding fast to the paradox of the Infinite speaking through the finite. If we respect this paradox in all of its implications, we shall not have to take recourse to the desperate theory that in the act of inspiration the Holy Spirit suspends ordinary psychological processes in the minds of the human authors of Scripture in order to keep them from any error whatever.

Those who do take recourse to the theory just mentioned ought to realize what they are doing: they are transferring to the human process in revelation the divine (exclusively divine) quality of infallibility. This is in effect to make men as God, to make them infallible. Inconsistently, many who reject the docetic Christology that transfers the qualities of Christ's divine nature to his human nature, thus utterly confuse the infallibility of Scripture in its divine aspect with its fallibility according to its human aspect. If the Bible really taught this about itself, we would have no alternative but to accept it; but there is plenty of indication that this is not what the Bible teaches.

It is wrong to demand of the Bible more than what God intends it for. It is the supreme and absolute authority on religious truth; its revelation of God and of His plan of salvation is infallibly true. This revelation of infallible truth comes to mankind through a historical, culturally conditioned process that shows in many ways the marks of human finitude. Of course, God possesses true and absolute knowledge of all matters, historical and scientific as well as cosmological and religious; but it was His good pleasure in the Bible not to convey such historical and scientific knowledge to us in the Bible, but His revelation about Himself. This is the real Treasure. If a recognition of the implications of a historical revelation means that we have this Treasure in an earthen vessel, let us be assured that the Treasure is not contaminated by the humble quality of its container.

Why then do some wrest the Scriptures and resort to all kinds of special pleading and wishful thinking in a vain attempt to transfer the divine attribute of infallibility to the human, finite aspect of the inscripturation of God's revelation? Those who resort to endless harmonizations and forced interpretations may think that they are honoring the Bible and defending it, but what they are in fact doing is subjecting it to dishonor and needless attack. Let all defenders of the truth make certain that they dig their trenches in the right places, lest the real citadel fall helpless before the enemy.

III

If we want the Bible to be for us a truly living book, we must learn to take seriously its historical, culturally conditioned, humanly mediated character. It was indeed written by men of like passions with us; yet the Almighty in His unique wisdom revealed His saving truth through them. Our belief in the infallibility of Scripture remains unshaken. As the Scottish divine James Orr once wrote:

> The most searching inquiry still leaves [us] with a Scripture, supernaturally inspired to be an infallible guide in the great matters for which it was given — the knowledge of the will of God for [our] salvation in Christ Jesus, instruction in the way of holiness, and the 'hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal.'*

**Revelation and Inspiration* (New York, 1910), p. 217.

The Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel

by Paul Calvin Zylstra

ONE OF THE DISPUTED POINTS IN REFORMED THEology — a point still disputed today — concerns the well-meant offer of the gospel. In this article I wish to show Calvin's thought on this matter as revealed to his sermons.

First of all, we should define what is meant by the well-meant offer in the light of such Scripture passages as Ezekiel 33:11; 18:23, 32; Matthew 5:44-48; 23:37; Luke 6:35, 36; 13:34; Acts 14:17; Deuteronomy 5:29; 32:29; Psalm 31:13f.; Isaiah 48:18; 45:22; II Peter 3:9.

God does not "desire," "will," "delight in" the death of the impenitent and reprobate; rather He desires, wills, and delights in their repentance and salvation. This grace deals with the full and free offer of the gospel to all without distinction — with respect to the revealed will, of course, and not the decretive will of God.[1]

This divine will (delight, desire) to save every man is not merely the bare preceptive will of God, but the expression of the heart of God Himself — a real and necessary attitude of lovingkindness inherent in the free offer. The gospel is not simply an invitation; it is also an offer that God desires the recipients to enjoy fully.

This divine desire, however, is not desire to salvation apart from the means of repentance and faith. God desires the salvation of the reprobate by their repentance. Thus to say "God desires their salvation" is to say "God desires their repentance."[2]

CALVIN CERTAINLY FEELS THAT GOD IS FAVORABLY disposed toward the reprobate when He calls him to repent and believe. The theological construction which one discovers in his sermons is conditioned by Scripture. Calvin never feels himself bound by his doctrine not to offer the grace of God with the most solemn adjurations to everyone who comes.

But do we feel in Calvin's sermons concern for lost sinners? What is his pulpit accent? How does he handle the knotty problem posed by this consideration: If God has decreed from all eternity to pass by some sinners with salvation, how can the invitation of the gospel be a *serious* offer of grace to the reprobate whom God never intended to save?

Calvin realizes the tension involved between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.[3] Man's faith in response to God's gracious promises is itself a dispensation of sovereign grace. But this does not eliminate the *condition* upon which the promises are received. Calvin recognizes that God's actions and man's interpenetrate, and that the promises of salvation come to the reprobate in a conditional form. Man's actions in accepting Christ are integrated into the realization of God's counsel. God's counsel is historically realized *in* and *through* the listener's activity.

Calvin implicitly believed that preaching is as much a part of God's decree as is sovereign election. To know that God ordained the service of *his preaching* to be a means of bringing men to repentance gave encouragement to Calvin. *God* makes the offer. Christ meets the sinner in preaching.

> We may then conclude . . . that the glory of God so shines in His Word, that we ought to be so much affected by it, whenever He speaks by His servants as though He were nigh to us, face to face.[4]

Again,

> The office of a good and faithful shepherd is not barely to expound the Scripture, but he must use earnestness . . . even to be importunate.[5]

Thus, when the preacher invites, the sinner is face to face with God Himself.

IF THEN THE OFFER MOTIF CAN BE UNDERSCORED, a remaining question is this: Does Calvin emphasize the decision-demanding nature of the offer? Gerstner insists that Calvin pressed unhesitatingly for decisions, assured that by the Spirit and the living Word God renews the sinner's will and calls forth a response.[6]

Calvin has to reckon with two kinds of people in his audience. If we think of Geneva at this time, 1554-1555, we must remember that *unbelievers* by droves came under his preaching willingly or by law. In every offer Calvin does make, he comforts the *elect*, and never fails to remind his listeners of God's initiative in salvation.

The sermon on II Timothy 1:8, 9, is a good illustation of Calvin's usage of the predestinarian theme. After developing this doctrine in the early part of the sermon, he presses for action:

> When God sends us this message of salvation, we have only to receive the inheritance which He promised us. Let us open our mouths, that He may fill them; let us

1. Cf. the excellent and concise statement in a booklet by John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Free Offer of the Gospel* (1948), especially page 15.

2. *Ibid.*, page 4.

3. Cf. the carefully reasoned discussion of this tension in *The Well-meant Offer*, by Dr. A. C. DeJong, pp. 82ff., pp. 92ff.

4. *Corpus Reformatorum*, 44:95, on Haggai 1:12, quoted by R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*, p. 82.

5. *Mystery of Godliness*, Sermon on II Timothy 3:16, 17, p. 137.

6. John Gerstner, "Calvin's Two-Voice Theory of Preaching," in *The Reformed Review*, Dec., 1959, pp. 15ff.

open our hearts, and give this testimony of the gospel leave to enter. . . .[7]

He concludes the sermon by urging his hearers not to be willingly blind but believing.

After discussing God's fixed decree, Calvin asks, What can we do, then? Have we any means to put forth ourselves? . . . We are called at this time because it pleased God to extend His mercy to us before we were born.[8]

He will bring us to the inheritance of life . . . if we receive it by faith. . . . When we receive the doctrine of God with obedience and faith, and rest ourselves upon His promises, and accept this offer that He makes us, to take us for His children, this is a certainty of our election.[9]

Calvin concludes this part of the discussion as follows,

When we inquire about our salvation, we must not begin to say, Are we chosen? . . . Let us hear what is said in the gospel. . . .[10]

Perhaps the best sermon for our purposes is the one on I Timothy 2:3-5. Calvin does not waste any words on introduction, but plunges into his subject as he always does. He begins by warning us not to despise sinners in the way of ruin.

The reason why Paul uses this argument, that God 'will have all men to be saved,' is that we may, as much as lies in us, also seek the salvation of those who seem to be banished from the kingdom of God; especially while they are unbelievers.[11]

Again he says,

Seeing it is the will of God that all men should be partakers of that salvation which He has sent in [Christ], we must endeavor to draw poor, silly, ignorant creatures to us, that we may all come together to this inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, which has been promised us.[12]

Yet Calvin tones this down by saying, in effect, "But look, Paul doesn't speak of every particular man, but of all sorts of men. Therefore, when he says God will have all men to be saved, we must not think that he speaks of them as individuals, but as a whole."

Is Calvin speaking of the decretive or revealed will at this point? These distinctions as indicated in his sermons will undoubtedly help:

Therefore St. Paul's meaning is not that God will save every man . . . .[13]

But again:

For God shows that He will be favorable to all: . . . it is God's will that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. We must mark well why St. Paul uses this argument; for we cannot know the will of Go unless it be made known to us.[14]

The first quotation refers to God's *decretive*, th second to God's *revealed*, will.

Still, Calvin hesitates to make even these dis tinctions in God's one will as we do. He looks a it now from our human standpoint, now fro God's. And he is most anxious to be free of th charge that he makes God have two wills. He de clares,

God has not two wills; nor does He use any counte feit dealing: and yet the Scripture speaks to us in tw ways concerning His will . . . because of our grossnes and want of understanding.[15]

After stopping to rebuke critics of predestina tion for several minutes, he returns to the subject

The will of God is opened to us, as often as we hea His Word preached, whereby He calls and exhorts u all to repentance. After He has once shown us tha we are all damned in His sight, and that there nothing but condemnation in us, He shows us tha we must renounce ourselves, and get out of this bo tomless pit. In that which God exhorts all men, w may judge that it is His will that all men should b saved: as He says by the prophet Ezekiel [18:23 33:11].[16]

Once more:

It is said that He offers His gospel to all, which the means of drawing us to salvation. And does th profit all men? No; of this our own eyes are witnesse For when we hear the truth of God, if we rebel again it, it proves a great condemnation to us. . . .

We say, as far as we can perceive, God would hav all men to be saved, whensoever, and how oft soeve He appoints His gospel to be preached to us. . . .

And this is the will of God, as far as we can com prehend it: that when He exhorts us to repentance, H is ready to receive us, if we will come to Him. . . .

When the gospel is preached to us, it is as muc as if God reached out His hand (as He says in Isa 65:2) and said to us, Come unto Me. It is a matte which ought to touch us to the heart when we perceiv that God comes to seek us. . . .

God calls all those to whom His Word is preached to salvation. If men reply by saying they cannot com to God, we cannot stand to plead here, for we wi always find ourselves in fault. If a man say, it res only in the hands of God, and if He would give m repentance could He not do it! If I remain stiff-necke in my hardness and malice, what can I do in thi case, seeing God will not give me repentance to tur to Him? This is not in any wise to be allowed; fo God calls us sufficiently to Him, and we cannot accus Him of cruelty. . . .[17]

AS I SEARCHED SUCH SERMONS AS THIS, ESPECIALL in the practical applications (which are generousl distributed throughout the exposition), I looked i vain for traces of fatalism. Calvin's sermons onl

7. *Mystery of Godliness*, Sermon on II Timothy 1:8, 9, p. 31.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
11. *The Mystery of Godliness*, Sermon on I Tim. 2:3-5, p. 97.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-108.

verify the evangelistic fervor he expresses in the *Institutes*:

> These observations I have faithfully borrowed from Augustine. . . .' It becomes us affectionately to desire the salvation of all. The consequence will be, that whomsoever we meet we shall endeavor to make him a partaker of peace . . . that they may neither perish themselves nor destroy others.'[18]

The closing paragraphs of Calvin's sermon on I Timothy 2:3-5 especially manifest his missionary spirit, particularly with respect to those who are lost in Roman Catholicism:

> We must endeavor, as much as possible, to persuade those who are strangers to the faith, and seem to be utterly deprived of the goodness of God, to accept of salvation. Christ is not only a Savior of few, but He offers Himself to all. . . . Therefore, we may be so much the more assured that God takes us for His children, if we endeavor to bring those to Him who are afar off. Let us comfort ourselves, and take courage in this our calling: although there be at this day a great forlornness, though we seem to be miserable creatures, utterly cast away and condemned, yet we must labor as much as possible to draw those to salvation who seem to be afar off.[19]

Add to that the following:

> When we see men going to destruction, God not having been so gracious as to join them with us in the faith of the gospel, we must pity them, and endeavor to bring them into the right way. . . . We must not utterly cast them off, but take all the pains we can to bring them again to the unity of the body. . . . When we see poor unbelievers wander from the way of salvation, we must have pity on them, and do all we can to reclaim them. . . . Those who do not endeavor to bring their neighbors and unbelievers to the way of salvation plainly show that they make no account of God's honor, and that they try to diminish the mighty power of His empire, and set Him bounds that He may not rule and govern all the world.[22]

For Calvin the church was always the *net,* never the *Fisherman.*

> When God sends His witnesses to proclaim the gospel, we ought to receive the message of salvation which they bring. . . . All who rebel against the gospel, and will not submit themselves to it, must not think that they have to deal with men, but God; for the work is His.[21]

Finally, in a sermon on II Timothy 3:16, 17,

> If an unbeliever come into the church and hear the doctrine of God, he is reproved and judged. By this we understand that although the unbeliever may be wrapped in darkness, and pleased with his own ignorance, yet when God so enlightens him that he sees his (past) misery and wickedness, while giving ear to the Word, he perceives the heavens open, and thus unbelievers are convicted.[23]

18. *Institutes,* II, 216.
19. *Ibid.,* pp. 109, 110.
20. *The Mystery of Godliness,* Sermon on I Tim. 2:5, 6, pp. 199, 200.
21. *Ibid.,* p. 212.
23. *The Mystery of Godliness,* Sermon on II Tim. 3:16, 17, p. 135.

The Los Angeles Case

by Harry R. Boer

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED SYNOD OF 1961 WILL have before it a report from a committee appointed by the Synod of 1960 to investigate the situation that has during the past three years developed between the Consistory of the Los Angeles Christian Reformed Church and Classis California with respect to a disciplinary action undertaken by the Los Angeles Consistory against a member of the congregation. It would seem desirable and useful to speak a public word about the present status of the Los Angeles case. The denomination is filled with rumors about insubordination to Classis and Synod on the part of the Los Angeles Consistory and its pastor. It was a judgment of insubordination that led the Synod of 1960 to enter the case and take far-reaching action with respect to it. What is the validity of the charge of insubordination that has been made?

In evaluating the present procedural status I shall not enter into the merits of the disciplinary action which precipitated the present situation. It lies quite beyond my interest to do this. It has been the duty of Consistory, Classis, Synod, and Synodical Committee to do this. My interest is in what is called "due process of law." It is a fundamental requirement of all ecclesiastical judical procedure that the law be followed in the act of adjudication. Under no circumstances may anything be allowed to undermine this cornerstone of ecclesiastical law. It is a deeply scriptural principle that the defendant be heard and the evidence of his defense be weighed.

I wish further to limit this discussion to its synodical aspect. There would be little point in bringing a purely consistorial or classical matter to the attention of the far wider readership of the *Journal.* Synodical involvement has, however, given both denominational significance and notoriety to the case. It is within these confines, then, and for these reasons, that this article is written.

A brief statement must be made about the status of the case in Classis California (meeting at Bellflower, May 11, 1960) after which classical meeting the censured party appealed the case to the Synod of 1960.

(1) Classis advised that censure be lifted when the appellant should have withdrawn two of the twenty-three pieces of evidence which he adduced to support his grave accusations against his Consistory and pastor. Classis further decided that formal withdrawal of these two items of evidence

"should be sufficient evidence that his attitude toward the Consistory had changed."

(2) Although the two pieces of evidence were withdrawn, the Consistory judged that there was not in fact a change of attitude on his part.

(3) The Consistory informed Classis that there had been no change of attitude, and that therefore censure had not been lifted.

(4) Classis, judging that the Los Angeles Consistory had not properly protested its advice, reprimanded the Consistory for having failed to take either of the two courses which, Classis held, were open to it, namely *either* to lift censure *or* to make proper protest.

(5) The Consistory promised to submit a formal Protest to the next meeting of Classis, protesting the insistence of Classis that censure be lifted even though the person concerned had not met the condition of a change of attitude laid down by Classis. This declaration Classis accepted at its May 11, 1960, meeting. At the October 1960 meeting the Protest was declared by Classis to be legally before it.

(6) Classis in its Minutes of May 11, 1960, specifically and formally *rejected* a recommendation from its committee concerned with the case that Classis take the matter to Synod.

It was at this point, with Classis and Consistory agreed to continue to work at the matter, that the censured party appealed to Synod (June, 1960), two weeks before Synod met.

In 1959 the censured party had also carried his appeal to Synod, but it had been rejected on the ground that it was still in process in Classis. Now, in 1960, Synod not only received his appeal, but adjudicated it completely in his favor. In doing so, it is clear that Synod attached more value to the judgment of the appellant than it did to the combined judgment of Consistory and Classis that the matter should remain in process on the classical level. The action of Synod is the more difficult to understand in the light of the fact that its committee of pre-advice stated in its report, "It must not be inferred that the Los Angeles Consistory is incapable of defending its basic position." In extenuation of Synod's action, it may be questioned whether the delegates of Classis California adequately informed Synod of the status of the case.

In pursuance of advice given, the Synod sustained the protestant in his protest, and granted his request that it take action to effect the lifting of censure. Synod instructed the Consistory of the Los Angeles congregation "to lift summarily the the censure" it had imposed. One of the grounds which it adduced for this action was: "The consistory of the Los Angeles church has erred in persistently refusing to lift censure when Classis California advised same at three different times over a period of one and one half years." This is obviously not an entirely true description of the facts. The classical position was that censure should be lifted if the censured party withdrew the two aforementioned items, and that this should be evidence of a change of attitude in the appellant. This change of attitude, in the judgment of the Consistory, had not occurred.

The Consistory of the Los Angeles church has consistently and with moral conviction held that the appellant was guilty of censurable sin. Neither Classis, nor its committees, have ever stated that this was an erroneous judgment, although they were repeatedly asked by the Los Angeles Consistory to declare themselves on this vital point. Neither did Synod declare itself on the matter. *This has been the crux of the Los Angeles case.* Moreover, in stating that "the consistory of the Los Angeles church did not protest this decision (of Classis) over a period of more than a year" Synod ignored all the actions of the Consistory which were protests in effect if not in name, as also the information given by a delegate from Classis California that a formal Protest from the Los Angeles Consistory would be acted upon by Classis at its forthcoming meeting. In view of all these considerations one wonders how Synod can be considered innocent of taking rather broad liberties with the stipulation of the Church Order that "in major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies. . . ."

Finally, Synod decided that "due to the complexity, magnitude, and gravity of the Los Angeles situation, Synod appoint a special committee to study the situation 'in loco,' which committee shall advise Synod on the matter in 1961." This committee was also instructed "to counsel all parties involved." I shall not detain the reader by belaboring the questionable wisdom of first taking utterly decisive action and then appointing a committee to investigate, counsel, and report.

Since the case was in process of adjudication in Classis California, and since Synod had not undertaken to invalidate the moral judgment of the Consistory concerning the censurableness of the appellant's charges and spirit, the Consistory declined to lift censure.

In due course the Investigating Committee arrived in Los Angeles. It assumed as beyond the scope of its investigation the validity of the Consistory's imposition of censure, or the validity of Synod's action in requiring the summary lifting of censure. The Committee held that censure had to be lifted regardless of the Consistory's judgment of conscience because Synod had spoken. In thus upholding the authority of Synod simply because Synod has spoken, the Committee was quite oblivious to the fact that if major bodies can nullify a Consistory's action without adducing moral

grounds arising out of the facts of the case, the whole moral government of the Church collapses. By failing to safeguard the authority of the basic and most important ecclesiastical body, namely, the consistory, which *alone* has the authority to impose or to lift censure, classes and synods can only hurt their own authority. The moral issue in the Los Angeles case was not whether the advice of Classis and Synod should or should not be accepted, but whether or not the Consistory's action was valid and proper. On this crucial point Classis was about to speak, Synod had not spoken, and the Synodical Committee refused to speak.

With the impasse created by the refusal of the Los Angeles Consistory to lift censure, the Synodical Committee met with Classis at Chino on October 11, 12, 13, 1960. What happened in the executive session that now followed I regret that I cannot report.

What I can report is that the following Sunday it was publicly announced that the Los Angeles Consistory had, under protest, lifted the censure of Mr. ———, and that in view of what this would mean in the light of the situation that obtained in the congregation, the Consistory deemed it wise to refrain temporarily from the celebration of Holy Communion until the matter should be resolved.

Classis had unanimously accepted this statement, previously made to it, as an answer to Classis and to Synod, and it was not objected to by the Synodical Committee.

Upon censure being thus lifted the appellant did not again attend the Los Angeles church but requested transfer of membership to another Christian Reformed church in the Los Angeles area.

I can further report that at the Chino Classis the Synodical Committee advised Classis that it should no longer entertain the Protests from the Los Angeles Consistory. This advice Classis declined to accept, declared the Protests legally before Classis, and decided to table them until the next meeting of Classis. At the next meeting (February, 1961) Classis had before it a communication from the Synodical Committee in which it gave the same advice, namely, that Classis give the Los Angeles Protests no consideration. This time Classis adopted the advice.

This is the Los Angeles case to date from the viewpoint of procedure followed in its synodical adjudication. I believe that the cause of proper ecclesiastical adjudication will be served, and that the position of the Los Angeles Consistory will be better understood, by taking note of the developments here recorded.

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

DEAR SIRS:

In his article "Reformed Scholarship and Infallibility" (*Reformed Journal*, February 1961) Dr. Harry R. Boer seriously misrepresents my position concerning the book of Ecclesiastes. Knowing Dr. Boer as I do, I feel sure that this is unintentional; it is, nevertheless, a misrepresentation and a very grave one. Dr. Boer writes, "The writer of Ecclesiastes, according to Professor Young, intended that Solomon should be understood to be the author." I do not, nor have I ever held such a position, for it would impute deceit to the author of Ecclesiastes. If the author was not Solomon and yet wrote in such a way as to give the impression that Solomon was the author, then he did a very dishonest and deceitful thing. Such a view I reject with all my heart.

The book of Ecclesiastes does not state who its author was. Conservative scholars, therefore, have differed in their view of authorship. Some have held that Solomon was the author. Others have maintained that the author is unknown, but that he employed the literary device of speaking through the mouth of "the king," i.e., Solomon. It is this position which I hold, and this is something quite different from saying that the unknown author ". . . intended that Solomon should be understood to be the author." The question of the authorship of Ecclesiastes is a difficult one, and there are weighty arguments both for and against the position of Solomonic authorship.

Apparently Dr. Boer thinks that rejection of the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes falls into the same category as rejection of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch or the Isaianic authorship of Isaiah. Such, however, is not the case. When the Bible says, "Moses wrote," or "Isaiah spake" that settles the question. Moses did write and Isaiah did speak. A Christian scholar must be guided by the express statements of the Bible.

Yet Dr. Boer seems to think that internal evidence, such as "language and diction," "political background," and "linguistic phenomena" may be used to interpret such phrases as "Moses spake" in such a way as practically to nullify their force (Read carefully what Dr. Boer says on p. 12, column 2, and p. 13, column 1). In this connection he lays down a challenge for me, a challenge which I am most eager to accept. He says, "Would Professor Young say that if somewhere Jesus had referred to Solomon as having said this or that in Ecclesiastes his (i.e., my) norms of

'language and diction,' 'political background,' and 'linguistic phenomena' would suddenly fall away?" This can be answered in one word, and the answer is "Yes." One who is constantly working with such matters as language and diction, etc., soon realizes how difficult and complex their study can be. Let me give but one example. Not so long ago the dominant school of destructive Old Testament criticism was sure that linguistic and other phenomena showed that Genesis did not accurately reflect the background of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but merely reflected the background of a much later period. They were sure that they had interpreted the "evidence" correctly. With the discovery in 1925 of the Nuzi tablets at Yorgan Tepe, however, this school of thought received a staggering blow, and today no informed person would say that Genesis does not accurately reflect the patriarchal background.

If Jesus Christ speaks on any subject, what He says is true, even though at times certain "evidence" may seem to run counter to His holy words. But of this we may be sure, the "evidence" does not really contradict what Jesus Christ says. The Christian scholar will accept this fact, knowing that Jesus Christ is omniscient. If then, the "evidence" might seem to point in one way, and our Lord in another, we should, as humble believers, follow our Lord. In His own good time He will cause us to see that all the "evidence," whether "linguistic phenomena," or "political background" or whatever it may be, is in perfect agreement with His blessed words. Yet Dr. Boer, with respect to the question of Isaianic authorship, remarks, "A very important argument always adduced to establish the full Isaianic authorship is the consideration that the Lord Jesus himself quotes from the chapters concerned and attributes the words to Isaiah by name. A more self-defeating argument would be hard to discover." With such a judgment I cannot possibly agree. I know of no better One to turn to than our blessed Lord "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" and who though heaven and earth pass away, yet His words will not pass away, for His very words are spirit and life.

Sincerely yours,
EDWARD J. YOUNG

RESPONSE

I must concede that the statement that the author of Ecclesiastes "placed his words in the mouth of Solomon" can carry the meaning that Professor Young meant to attach to them. I must with equal frankness say, however, that this possibility appears to me only after reading Professor Young's comment. The obvious meaning of the words as they stand would seem to be that the author of Ecclesiastes expected his readers to regard the book as a production of Solomon.

Granting that the words in question can bear the meaning intended by Professor Young, we are really no closer to the solution of the problem I raised. That problem is: If on basis of literary, linguistic, historical and similar phenomena another than Solomon can be regarded as having written Ecclesiastes, why, on basis of similar phenomena, cannot others than Moses and Isaiah be partial authors of the Pentateuch and of Isaiah? Professor Young's answer is that this cannot be allowed because Jesus specifically refers to Moses and Isaiah as the authors of the books concerned. It must be pointed out, however, that Jesus did not himself write any part of the Gospels. What we have in the Gospels is reports of his words written by men as finite as the author of Ecclesiastes. My question — the central question — is: Why is the report of the human writers of the Gospels more authoritative, more definitive, more final, than the report of the writer of Ecclesiastes? If a quotation from Jesus is the end of all argument, nullifying any and all literary, linguistic and historical considerations, why does not the statement, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1) and "The Preacher sought to find pleasing words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth" (12:10) *equally* nullify any and all similar criteria that might lead to the conclusion of another authorship than Solomon's? Does not the doctrine of infallibility ascribe *equal* inspiration and inerrancy to *all* the writers of the Bible? Were they not all verbally inspired by the same Spirit according to the accepted doctrine? Therefore one cannot rigorously apply the doctrine of verbal inspiration to the words of Christ and withhold such application from the inspired writer of Ecclesiastes.

Further, Professor Young writes, "When the Bible says, 'Moses wrote,' or 'Isaiah spake' that settles the question . . . . A Christian scholar must be guided by the express statements of the Bible." Well, the express statement of the Bible is that "the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem" wrote. How can there then be a question about the authorship of Ecclesiastes?

I fully grant Professor Young's right to call the literal accuracy of that statement into question. But if this right obtains, I am quite unable to see why others do not have the same right with respect to investigating the authorship of other books. It seems to me that for one who stands on the traditionally accepted doctrine of infallibility, it is utterly inconsistent and unallowable to give an authority to the words of Jesus that is withheld from the Holy Spirit speaking through the verbally inspired writers of other books. One of two: investigation of authorship on basis of various criteria is legitimate, *or* such investigation must be held to be illegitimate *also* with respect to Ecclesiastes.

HARRY R. BOER

SIRS:

Of course I want to renew my subscription to the *Reformed Journal.* It is the best paper in our circles. It's as refreshing as a mountain breze. Its writers are not heretic-hunters.

It believes that the article of our Apostolic faith dealing with the oneness of the church universal is not merely to be repeated by mouth each Sunday, but that this is a living confession which should be translated into action.

It also believes that the church year should be better observed, giving the great historical events of the Christian faith as related in Scripture a more prominent place in our church calendar.

May you go on from "strength to strength."

Sincerely,
HAROLD BALLAST
Denver, Colorado

SIRS:

I should like to place in the *Journal* a few thoughts regarding some aspects of the Home Missions policy of the Christian Reformed Church. My intention in this letter is that the present financial programming of the Home Missions Board unintentionally stymies progress on the home mission fields.

In order to understand my reasoning it is essential to know, at least to a limited degree, what a mission church's greatest potential is, how that church can most effectively operate to embody that potential, and the basis on which the Home Missions Board makes loans to the home mission churches.

It is my opinion, based upon six years of membership and association with the mission church in Columbus, Ohio, that children who live within a reasonable driving range of the mission church constitute its greatest source for growth. Prospective adult converts are, of course, not to be neglected; however, the blunt facts are that most incoming adults in the average mission church are already Christian and are merely making arrangements for a new church home. It is further true that the nonconfessing adults who are parents can best be approached through their children; however, this adage is too frequently construed to mean that there are more prospective converts among adults than among children or that the souls of adults are more important than the souls of the young. A mission church must serve the children of the confessing, the nonconfessing and the nonconforming parents. To meet this challenge there must be effective, outgoing, yet acceptable action on the part of the mission church.

Success in obtaining continuous and regular attendance of children of nonconforming parents who acquiesce to their children's attending the mission is dependent upon the church's ability to provide an adequately interesting program within and around the church and a convenient mode of transportation. Children of unchurched parents need special attention. Before children learn to appreciate any certain church on a doctrinal basis and associate themselves with it, intriguing methods of teaching, pleasant church surroundings, good classrooms, acceptable play areas and social activities within their respective age groups must obtain. This type of program calls for the best possible use of the mission dollar. Progressive denominations are keenly aware of this and are carefully planning their children's programs.

Our home mission churches in general are desirous of developing an effective mission program among the children, but under the present financial programming of the Home Missions Board the hands of the average home mission church are partially tied. To illustrate, one can roughly say that the funds advanced to Home Missions are used to defray the current expenses of the home mission churches, including the administration of them, and to construct church buildings in areas that show probable growth. The part of the funds of Home Missions that is used for initial construction and real estate costs in home mission fields is essentially a loan to the newly organized groups. Loans are given to the respective groups with the expectation that the amount of the loan will be repaid to Home Missions. At first glance, this arrangement seems suitable and within the framework of the intention of the gift to the cause of home missions. However, a close examination of this presently effective financial plan of Home Missions as it relates to the initial construction and layout cost reveals that this accepted plan eventually results in semi-stagnation in the newly organized mission churches, a situation no one cares to support financially.

It is common knowledge that a newly organized mission church generally has only a handful of reliable supporting members. These few reliable members cannot by themselves provide the financial needs of an outgoing and active mission church. They cannot supply buses and the other aforesaid necessities for making an imprint on members of a modern community, and at the same time pay for the initial real estate and construction cost. If the initial layout cost were donated to the mission group without obligation to repay Home Missions, the newly organized group would be able to supply the demands of its local area at an earlier stage. This would accelerate the growth of the church. A

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speedy growth in our mission fields would naturally result in more immediate donations to the general Home Missions Fund, which in turn would eventually create a greater supply line to other areas.

When a small group of people in a mission church is conscious of a debt to Home Missions for a church building and the involved real estate, they are rightfully relunctant to incur additional debt for mission purposes, even though they know that the Home Missions Board would not unduly press them for payment. The net result of this procedure is that our own mission churches exist without adequate facilities or capacity to compete with the active modernistic churches which are pre-empting the field.

Stagnation or slow growth is the natural consequence of a program that calls for repayment of a large sum of money from a small group of people. It is inverse planning to look to a struggling, newly organized church in a mission field for repayment in order to establish other financially handicapped mission churches. Money needed to establish new fields or to assist the already established missions should not be made an obligation on newly organized indigent mission churches. Funds for mission progress should be sought in the old established churches, leaving the new baby churches with their own income to pay their respective quotas and to purchase essentials to expand and to advance themselves to maturity. In reality we have adopted a system where the poor support the poor.

If newly organized churches in mission fields are not financially released to compete with the modernistic churches, stagnation or slow growth results, whereupon skepticism and wrongful imagination runs rampant through the minds of local residents. This adverse thinking on the part of partially interested prospective members is difficult to overcome. When such an unfortunate reputation takes root in a mission field, the mission church may become little more than a refugee camp for incoming or transient Christian Reformed members who conveniently embalm themselves, and their Christianity, in their common culture.

Sincerely yours,

RUSSELL H. VOLKEMA

Columbus, Ohio

A MAN WITH GOD
IS ALWAYS IN THE MAJORITY

. . . Inscription on the Reformation Monument, Geneva, Switzerland

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